

**Ex. 5A**

**Proposal to open a branch of**  
**Stratford University**  
**American Stratford University - Erbil**

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## **Introduction**

Stratford University - Erbil is the first truly American University branch in Iraq with full accreditation and recognition from the US. The Stratford University - Erbil branch strictly follows the guidelines and educational system mandated by the US higher educational ministry and is permitted to award degrees similar to other American Stratford University branches in the US.

Stratford University - Erbil is a private educational institution dedicated to preparing students for the challenges of a rewarding career. Alumni pursue professions in high-demand fields like information technology, hospitality, culinary arts, business administration, health sciences, and nursing. Stratford University currently has locations in Falls Church, Woodbridge, Richmond, Newport News, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Baltimore, Maryland and an international branch in New Delhi- India.

Stratford University - Erbil offers Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's Degrees as well as many non-credit workshops and courses. Stratford University - Erbil's curriculum combines advanced technology, hands-on labs and traditional educational methods to create a program that produces a valuable educational service to our students and their future employers.

## **Purpose**

The higher education ministry in Kurdistan has conducted great changes in the educational system and has attempted to update the current system with their available resources. The ministry has reformed and ameliorated the educational system in Kurdistan and developed plans to further expand the quality of education to cope with the current market needs. Moreover, the higher educational ministry spends millions of dollars annually to send students outside Kurdistan to continue their education.

The Stratford University - Erbil aims to cooperate with the Kurdistan higher educational ministry to attain their goals by establishing a high quality American University in Erbil, which is focused towards high quality and standards. Stratford University - Erbil aims to provide the same American quality education in Erbil and in

the meantime, increase the marketability and employability of the students in the current market. The graduated students would be able to work in the government and private sector. Moreover, the students in Stratford University - Erbil would have an option to compliment their education in any Stratford University branch in the US.

The recent rapid developments in Kurdistan have also absorbed many foreigner professionals from outside Kurdistan to work on the projects while; a large number of unemployed locals exist. The reason is because the foreign companies require qualified graduates with experience and therefore, the American Stratford University's primary objective is to ensure the students gain the knowledge and experience so as to enter the job market. In the meantime, Stratford University - Erbil will also contact the local and foreign companies to deliver the quality of education that could make our students hireable.

Opening a branch of Stratford University is aimed to benefit the Kurdish students and the government in Kurdistan. According to the annual educational reports, over 30,000 students in Kurdistan are unable to join any university owing to the over capacity of the existing universities. Stratford University - Erbil is capable to accept thousands of these students as a unique and the largest educational project in Kurdistan with affordable tuition fees and high standard education.

The primary objective of this project is to introduce an American University system of education, which is internationally accredited and fully recognized. The purpose of this project is to introduce high quality education in a national level. Since we have learnt that the KRG's higher education ministry only accepts branches of universities to function in Kurdistan, we are opening a branch of American Stratford University, which is entirely controlled by the Stratford management and academic system in the US and also monitored by the US accreditation bodies. The Erbil branch of American Stratford University will also be visited regularly by the US accreditation delegations to assess the quality and accreditation.

Stratford University - Erbil will offer undergraduate, graduate, and English as a Second Language degree programs. Stratford University - Erbil is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) to award Master's,

Bachelor's and degrees and diplomas in a variety of fields including business administration, accounting, information systems, software engineering, culinary arts, hospitality management, health care administration, and nursing. Stratford University - Erbil will have a diverse student population, with international students.

Stratford University - Erbil offers Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, as well as many non-credit workshops and courses. Their curriculum combines advanced technology, hands-on labs and traditional educational methods to create a program that produces a valuable educational service to our students and their future employers.

**Diverse Education ranked American Stratford University as one of the Top 100 Graduate Degree Producers for All Disciplines in 2009.** This reveals the quality of the Stratford University and the emphasis on individual learning methods results in student academic success without lowering required employer-based standards. Consequently, Stratford alumni enjoy a high placement rate in high-demand industries.

### **Stratford University - Erbil Goals**

The Stratford University - Erbil is pleased to present the following proposal to the ministry of higher education in Kurdistan. Based on the American Stratford University board members' longstanding experience with scholarship in Middle East and international campuses abroad, the board is fully supportive of the idea of establishing a physical branch for the American Stratford University in Erbil, and feels that it would greatly benefit the University academically and institutionally. Having an Erbil branch would enable the American Stratford University to enhance and expand such educational programs significantly. The academic opportunities, which could be housed or promoted through the Stratford Erbil branch include:

- Offering college programs
- Facilitation of research/collaboration with Iraqi & Kurdish universities and research institutions
- Recruitment of students and faculty
- Professional training programs, certificates, etc.
- Workshops and conferences for faculty and graduate students
- Public programming, including those featuring Stratford faculty

- Promotion of alumni affairs and development initiatives

Having an American Stratford University branch in Erbil and the increased level of activity afforded by such a branch would allow the University to compete more effectively with its peers in the Middle East. The increased recognition of Erbil and its commitment to international leadership will help improve recruitment on the Erbil campus and create a cycle of improved collaboration and connections in Iraqi Kurdistan. The board recommends that the proposed Stratford University - Erbil be established and housed similar to other branches in the US, while it should cater for the local Kurdistan market.

### **Accreditation and Affiliations**

Stratford University is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) to award certificate, diploma, associate, bachelor, and master degrees. It is also a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a national advocate and institutional voice for self-regulation of academic quality through accreditation. CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes 60 institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.

Stratford University is exempt from certification by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to operate campuses in Virginia as it has been properly accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in excess of ten years. The undergraduate and graduate programs are approved for federal student financial aid by the U.S. Department of Education.

The University has the authority to issue I-20s by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for F-1 visas. All programs have been approved for the training of veterans. The Virginia and the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services approve all programs.

The Virginia Board of Nursing approves the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to accept students. Students are eligible to sit for the NCLEX-RN examination after graduating from the program. The baccalaureate program at Stratford University is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

The goal of Stratford University - Erbil is to provide quality career-focused programs to meet the needs of high-demand industries. Stratford University is proud of its industry and educational affiliations. Stratford has the following accreditations and recognitions and affiliations:

- Accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools to award Diplomas, Associates, Bachelors, and Masters Degrees.
- The ACICS is recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Recognition by CHEA affirms that the standards and processes of the accrediting organization are consistent with the academic quality, improvement and accountability expectations that CHEA has established.
- American Stratford University is exempt from requirements of oversight to grant Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's Degrees by State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV).
- Accredited by the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation
- Undergraduate and graduate programs approved for Federal Student Financial Assistance programs
- Approved for the Training of Veterans
- Member, Service Members Opportunity College
- Authorized to enroll Immigration Alien Students
- Microsoft IT Academy
- Executive Board Member, Internet Society
- Member, Northern Virginia Technology Council
- Member, Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board
- Member, Career College Association
- Board Member, Virginia Career College Association
- Collegiate Partner, Baltimore Recruiting Battalion

- Affiliated member of the American Culinary Federation
- Member, Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Education
- Member, Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington
- Supporting Member, Careers in Culinary Arts Program
- Affiliated member of the International Food Service Executives Association
- Member, International Association of Culinary Professionals
- Future Business Leaders of America + Phi Beta Lambda
- Member, Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- Member, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce
- Member, Eastern Prince William Chamber of Commerce
- Business Partner, West Potomac High School
- Partner, American Hotel and Lodging Association
- Approved by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Approved by District of Columbia Rehabilitation Services
- International standard syllabus from the universities will be taught and degrees will be awarded from the affiliated institutes.

### **Mission of Stratford University - Erbil**

Stratford University - Erbil is a private institution of higher learning. The student body is diverse, including recent high school graduates, working professionals, international students, and persons desiring to change their career fields. The mission of Stratford University is to prepare students for rewarding and challenging careers by providing quality, competency-based educational programs that meet the changing needs of employers in emerging high-demand industries.

In order to meet this mission, the University offers a variety of certificate, diploma, associate, bachelor, and graduate programs in emerging and high employment demand fields. To meet the needs of a diverse community of learners, the University provides education that balances technical, professional, and critical thinking components.



In pursuit of this mission, the University seeks to ensure:

- Student's career goals are met by matching students with appropriate programs of study.
- A quality learning experience by employing faculty committed to learning and who demonstrate excellent teaching skills.
- Relevant curricula through input from the governing board, advisory boards, and graduates.
- Student success through a comprehensive support program including financial planning, academic assistance, and other student services. The mission of Erbil Stratford University is to prepare students for rewarding and challenging careers by providing quality competency-based educational programs that meet the changing needs of employers in emerging high demand industries.
- Instructional Focus: Programs are directed toward specific instructional goals coupled with small class size. All curricula, presentations, supportive reference materials, and student-teacher interactions are collectively driven by this strategy.
- Communication: Effective use of communication reinforces the instructional message. Creative seating arrangements and small group projects are used to encourage student to student and student to teacher interaction. Programs are structured to cultivate an environment of teamwork.
- Self-Discovery: Hands-on learning using actual equipment is essential to the University's instructional methodology. The University recognizes hands-on learning as a key to long-term retention of information. In the final analysis, the University combines sound instructional technology with an insight into the career market to produce a valuable and unique educational experience.

### **Schools and Departments**

Many of the above insights are based on American Stratford University's research on the status of higher education in Iraq and Kurdistan. Stratford University - Erbil offers Diplomas, Bachelors, and Masters degrees in business administration, computer information systems, culinary arts, hospitality management, health sciences, and nursing.

The educational system for Stratford University - Erbil would be similar to the US branches. This branch would also have the same curriculum; exams and degrees granted by the Stratford University in the US and accredited by the US government and the accreditation bodies from the US. The educational system would be a credit-based system. As the initial step, the Stratford University - Erbil plans to accept minimum 100 students per department. This number could become much larger depending on the capacity of the university and the faculty.

The Schools and Departments of the Stratford University - Erbil are as followings:

### **School of Business Administration**

The School of Business Administration offers programs to meet the diverse educational needs and professional goals of students, while at the same time meeting the changing needs of employers. Stratford University - Erbil applies critical thinking to the classroom as an integral part of the teaching/learning cycle. This process provides a disciplined synthesis of the material presented to students. The school has the following departments:

- *Business Management*
- *Accounting*
- *Entrepreneurial Business Administration*
- *Oil & Gas Management*

### **School of Computer Information Systems**

The School of Computer Information Systems is dedicated to educating students in the principles and practices of Computer Information Systems and to prepare them for careers in software development and computing systems technology. The school has the following departments:

- *Software Engineering*
- *Cyber Security Engineering*
- *Information Systems*
- *Telecommunications*
- *Network Engineering*

#### **School of Health Sciences**

- *Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences*
- *Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Administration*
- *Bachelor of Science in Health Information Management*

#### **School of Nursing**

- *Bachelor of Science in Nursing*

#### **School of Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management**

The School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management offers programs to meet the diverse educational needs and professional goals of students, while at the same time meeting the changing needs of employers. Stratford University has applied critical thinking to the classroom as an integral part of the teaching/learning cycle. This process provides a disciplined synthesis of the material presented to students. Stratford University - Erbil prepares students for a wide range of careers in the food service and hospitality industries. The school has the following departments:

- *International Hospitality Management*
- *Hotel & Restaurant Management*
- *Culinary Management*

**Bachelor Degree Requirement**

	<b>Credits Required</b>	<b>Number of Classes</b>
Core Component	63	14
Concentration	18	4
Electives	45	10
Arts and Sciences	54	12
<b>Total Required for Graduation</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>40</b>

**Master Degree Requirement**

	<b>Credits Required</b>	<b>Number of Classes</b>
Core Component	36	8
Specialization	18	4
<b>Total Required for Graduation</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>12</b>

**Student and Faculty Recruitment**

An important activity for the Stratford University - Erbil branch would be to increase the University's ability to recruit and retain the students and faculty, and other faculty whose work would be enhanced through a greater University presence in Erbil.

As such the Stratford University - Erbil could provide high quality education to thousands of students. Students would be able to continue their education in their field of studies in any American Stratford University branch in the US.

The management team of the Stratford University - Erbil would be conducted by a team of experts from the American Stratford University. This group will be physically located in Erbil. In the mean time, the management will gradually involve local managers after ensuring their competency.

### **Admission Procedures**

Students would need to apply and submit the following documents to American Stratford University. These documents are used to establish academic potential and evaluate student's ability to enroll in the educational program.

Application for Admission

Academic transcripts

Proof of language proficiency

GRE or GMAT test scores (if required)

Proof of financial support (international students only)

Copy of passport (international students only)

Application fee

### **Acceptance by Stratford**

After a student submits the application, the Acceptance Committee will review it. If the student meets the acceptance requirements, the student will be accepted into the program. If the committee has additional questions about student's suitability, the student may be invited for a personal interview with the program Dean or required to complete an additional assessment. Our goal is to give the student every opportunity to meet the acceptance criteria.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Stratford University - Erbil follows diversification policies to ensure that all the local and international students are treated equally.

Stratford University - Erbil does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or handicap. The school complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, related executive orders 11246 and 11375, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 and all civil rights laws of Virginia

### **Stratford University - Erbil Campus Location**

In light of the objectives for the American Stratford University, our team had lengthy discussions of optimal location and feasibility. Some of the criteria considered important included: proximity to and location in the centers of academic excellence, and of culture/history, and of policy and business activity; visibility; ease of access (domestic and international transportation/infrastructure); and hospitality to foreign academic operations.

- Conference room / activity room: This space would allow for multi-functional use including events, performance space, and conferences.
  - Classroom(s): At least fifty classrooms with capacity for 20-25 students would be required (with the assumption that all classroom space in such a center would be fully equipped “smart” space). This space would primarily be used for teaching or training classes, but they could also be used for students’ group study rooms.
  - Computer lab: This type of workspace would be required to support research or teaching,
  - Library/learning center: This space is dedicated to a large library.
- Offices: Approximately a dozen offices would be needed to house the branch operations and to allow for use by faculty and/or graduate students.
- Kitchen facilities: Basic kitchen space would be necessary to enable the branch to host events.

Parking Facilities: As required for the faculty and the students.

Fitness Center: Used by both faculty and the students.

Dormitories: Would be used for both faculty and students.

Cafes: Used for the students during breaks.

Medical Facility: Used by faculty and students.

### **Financial Investment**

In order to establish a successful, truly broad-based American Stratford University branch in Erbil, the board believes it is essential that such a branch be sufficiently supported so that its basic operations are assured. This would include the costs of building, operations and staffing costs, so that the activities and the programming for the branch are not dictated by revenue needs.

### **Stratford University - Erbil Structure for International Initiatives**

In the course of its deliberations, in order to improve its international initiatives Stratford University - Erbil board has determined to have a centralized locus of support for international initiatives, either in the Provost's office or at a vice presidential level, will be necessary to expand its international presence. Not only would such a position be able to facilitate functions noted below, but this would demonstrate the commitment to an increased global profile for the University, and reinforce that this is a university-wide center, allowing the center increased interaction and influence with faculty and deans than it otherwise would have if it were based in one unit of the University.

While programs and academic offerings should still be developed by various units and schools throughout the University, some specific functions which Stratford University - Erbil might better provide. These could include but are not limited to the following:

Protocol functions: Ensuring that a common point of contact or facilitator would be available to provide the appropriate institutional presence.

Oversight of visa and other administrative requirements: Assisting with the varying needs across campus, and facilitating conversation across units about how requirements and needs differ across programs and units.

Repository and resource for agreements: Housing the various memoranda, letters of agreement, etc. across units, thereby providing easier access to model or template agreements.

Coordination of programs: Facilitating of program development across different campus units.

Regulatory knowledge: Providing depth of knowledge or resources for understanding the impact of various regulations on educational programs in individual countries.

Assistance with American Stratford University US delegations: Aiding university delegations going overseas to represent the University, and proactively developing opportunities to increase this type of interaction

Receiving delegations from overseas: This is especially relevant in the case of Erbil as many Iraqi universities have sent delegations to the US to learn about American universities and to explore opportunities for cooperation.

Collaboration with Development Office: Expanding international presence, cooperation, and programs with alumni and increasing engagement.

By pursuing parallel tracks of increasing its international presence through university centers abroad, and of strengthening the visibility and support for



international engagement at its Virginia campus, the University will be better positioned for more successful global engagement

### **Personnel and Staffing**

In order to support the types of programs and activities envisioned for an American Stratford University branch in Erbil, the board discussed various staffing models. These are the main positions that would be filled in the Stratford University - Erbil. Some of the positions would be replaced by qualified local staff:

Dr. Richard R. Shurtz, II... President and Chief Executive Officer  
 Mary Ann Shurtz..... Executive Vice President  
 Dr. James J. Flaggert..... Chief Academic Officer  
 John Dovi, CPA..... Chief Financial Officer  
 Feroze Khan..... Vice President, International Programs  
 Bridge Heekin..... Vice President, Human Resources  
 Carla Johnson..... University Financial Director  
 Kevin Coughenour..... Director of IT  
 Alan Mackey.....Applications Systems Architect  
 Natasha Johnson..... Assistant Controller  
 April Holt..... Staff Accountant  
 Naila Samuel..... Payroll Specialist  
 Shameilia Walters..... Accounting Assistant  
 Shanell Massenburg..... Loan Default Specialist  
 Raul Zambrano..... Accounts Payable Specialist  
 Keith Jones..... Marketing Specialist  
 Dr. Monica Minor-Exum... University Curriculum Specialist  
 Terasita Edwards..... Compliance Manager  
 Veronica Gogan..... Compliance Officer  
 Dr. Zelalem Hailu..... Instructional Technology Specialist  
 Muhammad Qamar..... Application Developer  
 Ammara Mahmood..... Technical Project Manager

Heather Richards..... Business Analyst, Registrar  
Natalia Kaneva..... Business Analyst, Financial Aid  
Amber Pereira..... Human Resources Coordinator  
Michal Quinto..... Human Recourses Generalist  
Burt Chaisarn ..... Human Resources Generalist  
Tricia Dell..... Human Resources Recruiter  
Tierra Perry..... Junior Recruiter  
Ahmed Darwaza..... IT Specialist  
Coran Savage..... IT Help Desk Coordinator  
Jeffery Chenoweth..... Manager, University Facilities  
Rachel Neal..... Receptionist

**American Stratford University Campus locations:**

- Falls Church, Virginia (Main Campus)
- Richmond, Virginia
- Woodbridge, Virginia
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Newport News, Virginia
- New Delhi, India